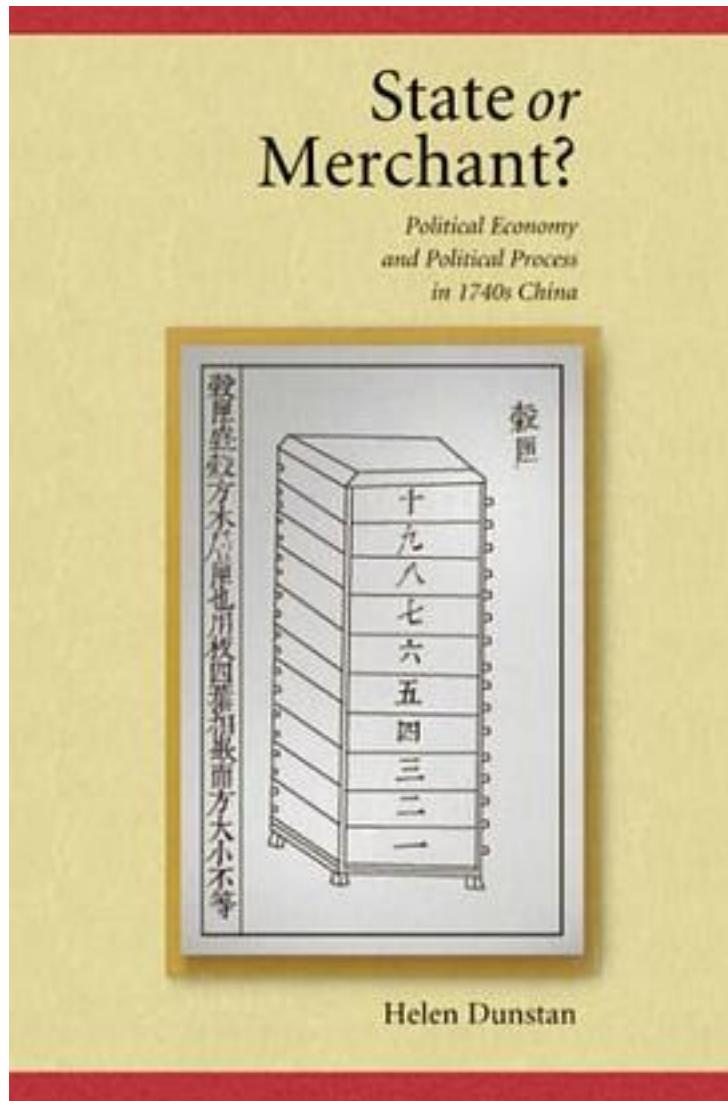


State or Merchant



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What did it mean to run a large, commercialized agrarian polity according to the best Confucian principles? This book is intended as a contribution to both intellectual and political history. It is partly a study of how Confucian-trained officials thought about the grain trade and the state's role in it, particularly the "ever-normal granaries", the stockpiles of grain maintained by every county government as protection against shortages and high prices. The author investigates the scope and limits of belief in market forces among those critical of government intervention, establishing that rudimentary economic arguments for state withdrawal from the grain trade were available by 1750. She then explores challenges, from within the ruling apparatus, to the state's claim that its own stockpiling served the public interest, as well as the factors behind decisions in the mid- and late 1740s to suspend or decrease state purchases of grain. As a study of Confucian government in action, this book describes a mode of public policy discussion far less dominated by the Confucian scriptures than one might expect. As a contribution to intellectual history, the work offers a detailed view of members of an ostensibly Confucian government pursuing divergent agendas around the question of "state or merchant?"

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评论

本书大的主旨是考察乾隆时期（1736-1752）的国家干预政策。作者主要关注仓储，讨论了国家对私人仓储和公共仓储的态度，常平仓是重点，最后一章也涉及其他福利政策，比如留养资送的废除、八旗米局的废除和对抢粮暴动愈加严厉，认为乾隆时期经历了从“福利国家”／“父爱主义”到更强调市场力量的转向。考察常平仓的时候使用了大量奏折讨论省级大员对常平仓的态度，比较有意思（chapters 7-8），能窥见常平仓运作中的不少制度细节。表达文学化而且细节很多，所以非常不好读，我是一天10页慢慢顺下来的……这也就意外假期才能有闲心干这个事情吧。

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